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EUSTIS WOMAN SENTENCED TO MORE THAN 24 YEARS FOR OFFERING CHILDREN FOR SEX AND PRODUCING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Orlando, Florida - U.S. Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces today that U.S. District Judge Patricia C. Fawcett sentenced Rhonda Jennette Bays (age 39, of Eustis) to 24 years and four months in federal prison for producing child pornography and conspiring with another to travel in interstate commerce to have sex with a minor. Bays had pleaded guilty on August 19, 2009.

According to court documents, in May 2009, Bays and her boyfriend, Tanner Stickney, concocted a plan for Stickney to travel from Washington, D.C. to the Orlando area in order to have sex with a child whom Bays knew and had access to. During the course of the plan, Bays offered Stickney two different children for sex. Agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) discovered the plan, and, on May 15, 2009, agents arrested Stickney as he landed at the Orlando International Airport. Bays was arrested at her home later that night.

During the course of the investigation, FBI agents further discovered that Bays and Stickney had arranged a previous trip in June 2008. During this previous trip, Stickney flew down to the Orlando area, where Bays and Stickney made a video of Stickney sexually abusing a young child. Agents found this video at Stickney's home in Washington, D.C.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Vincent S. Chiu.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet and to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.